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"productivity" theory of distribution would give to beginners a clearer and more accurate idea of the influences determining wages, interest, profits, and rent, than the somewhat confusing combination of theories that Dr. Bullock presents.

H. R. S.

A General Freight and Passenger Post. A Practical Solution of the Railroad Problem. By JAMES LEWIS COWLES. Pages xii, 155. Price, \$1.00. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896.

This little book is characterized by the general advantages and disadvantages of the other volumes in the Questions of the Day Series. It presents a brief and somewhat dogmatic view of the question discussed. The book contains four chapters. The first, devoted to the post-office since 1839, contains a brief general description of the development of the post-office in England and the United States. The second chapter discusses the abuses of the present system of railway management, setting forth in a clear way the absurdities and inconsistencies underlying the system of passenger and freight tariffs in existence in the United States to-day. The author has a tolerably easy task to prove that very few systems could be worse or more illogical. He emphasizes properly enough the proposition that the railways are, from an economic and social point of view, really public instead of private institutions, while they are managed as if they were purely private in character. The third chapter takes up the real discussion of the subject, and attacks the principle of distance as a basis for the determination of railway rates. Much interesting evidence is adduced to show how steadily and rapidly the cost of transportation decreases as the traffic grows. The fourth and last chapter considers the principle of cost of service as a basis of public transportation charges, and an interesting argument is made in favor of adopting this principle instead of the distance principle.

There is no doubt that American railway managers have failed to discern the possibilities of the passenger traffic as a source of income. Their minds have been so exclusively fixed upon the freight business, and we may say, upon the long-distance through-freight business, that they have been blind to the possibilities of profit in the development of the passenger traffic and of local freight business.

Of course from an economic point of view the whole possibility of going over to the system of uniform rates for passengers and freight, independent of distance, turns at bottom upon the possible increase of the business itself, and it must be confessed that at this time any set of railroad managers who should adopt this reform would be

walking by faith instead of by sight. That, of course, is of itself no argument against the wisdom or feasibility of adopting such a reform. On the contrary, the great changes and improvements which have come about in questions of public policy have been the result of such faith, of such intuitive insight and foresight, rather than of timid and overcautious experimentation. But those who believe in the possibility of the reform need not be surprised at the conservatism of practical railroad managers on this subject. There is little doubt, however, of a steady development in the direction indicated by the author of this book, unless our ideas as to the social function and possibility of the railway and its management should develop along entirely different lines from those which seem likely now. In spite of its brevity the book gives the best account of the movement for a reform in our freight and passenger tariff policy and the best argument in its behalf which have thus far been given in English.

EDMUND J. JAMES.

The Evolution of the Constitution of the United States. By SYDNEY GEORGE FISHER. Philadelphia: The J. B. Lippincott Co., 1897.

"If I find on American soil the footprints of a man, and wish to discover whence he came, I surely ought not to assume at once that he is a foreigner, and take the next steamer for England or Holland, to see if I can find footprints over there that are like his. . . . for it may be that he is a native." With this for his text, and the growth of American institutions for his topic, Mr. Fisher has given us a brief, but comprehensive, study of the sources of our national constitution. He summons before him the various theories on this subject, the English, the Dutch, the ancient Greek, and even Mr. Gladstone's memorable dictum; he examines each with a critical, and often a hostile, eye, and finds them all wanting. These critical chapters, while not well condensed, contain much that is valuable. Having disposed of these theories of the foreign origin of our institutions, the author next turns to American sources, and in three excellent chapters, one on "Evolution from the Colonial Charters," and two on the "Evolution of Federalism," he shows the direct influence exerted on our constitutional development by the experience of the colonies and states. In this part of the work the author is at his best; he portrays most accurately the growth of the legislative, executive and judicial departments of the federal government from the colonial charters, and shows with a clearness that is almost startling, the logical growth of the federal idea through the innumerable plans of union. These plans begin with the New England